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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20310

IN REPLY REFER TO
AGAM-P (M) (24 Jul 68)

FOR OT RD 68X037

12 August 1968

SUBJECT: Combat After Action Report - Battle of LANG VEI, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), 1st Special Forces, Period 24 January - 7 February 1968 (U)

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2. Information contained in this report is provided to insure appropriate benefits in the future from lessons learned during current operations and may be adapted for use in developing training material.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
Major General, USA
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
COMPANY C

5TH SPECIAL FORCES GROUP (AIRBORNE), 1ST SPECIAL FORCES
APO San Francisco 96337

AVGB-SFC

22 February 1968

SUBJECT: AFTER ACTION REPORT BATTLE OF LANG VEI

1. GENERAL SITUATION:

a. The Lang Vei Camp Strike Force Camp had the primary mission of border surveillance and area pacification. The border surveillance is on that portion of the border that is adjacent to the border within the Taor. The area pacification is a combination of the Detachment Military Civic Action/Psychological Operations in conjunction with District and Province level programs. In conjunction with surveillance and pacification, the camp had the requirement for a complete reconnaissance of its Taor every month.

b. Camp Lang Vei was located in the extreme northwestern corner of South Vietnam. The Camp (COORDS XD 786357) was situated southwest of Khe Sanh Combat Base and approximately two kilometers east of the Laotian border. Camp Lang Vei's Taor was strategically located and contained several broad valleys which are likely choices of infiltration routes from Laos in the west and northwest and from the DMZ in the north toward Khe Sanh Combat Base.

c. During the night of 6 and 7 February the weather was clear with scattered to broken clouds, bases 3000 feet to 5000 feet. However, as the night wore on the weather grew progressively worse. By 0230 the stratus ceiling was below 1000 feet accompanied by some ground fog which greatly hindered visibility.

2. FRIENDLY SITUATION PRIOR TO THE ATTACK:

a. 240800 January: Camp Lang Vei received word from Khe Sanh Combat Base that the 33rd Laotian elephant battalion had been overrun by NVA units in conjunction with tanks. It was also stated that survivors from the 33rd Laotian element and refugees were enroute to the camp's location. The Laotian soldiers and refugees closed into the Lang Vei area during the evening of 24 January. On 25 January, the 33rd Laotian Elephant Battalion was allowed to take up positions in the old camp Lang Vei (COORDS XD 794361). The Laotian refugees were taken to Lang Vei village to where temporary housing was provided.

b. 251853 January: Camp Lang Vei received an unknown number of artillery rounds from the west (Vicinity Coords XD 744317) resulting in one friendly WIA.

c. 311130 January: A three platoon Mobile Strike Force Reconnaissance Operation made a chance contact with an estimated three company NVA force (Vicinity XD 815375) resulting in one friendly KIA and four WIA while the enemy suffered 54 KIA, 65 WIA and an estimated 80 to 100 killed by air.

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d. From 20 January through 5 February, sporadic enemy mortar and artillery fire were received in and around Camp Lang Vei. This appeared to be zeroing and harassment fire.

e. From the 31st of January until the camp was overrun, small reconnaissance patrols and ambush patrols were initiated approximately one to three kilometers in all directions of the camp. The reconnaissance patrols had the mission of confirming locations of reported NVA troop positions. Only three of the above operations made contact that resulted in friendly or enemy KIA. Those results are as follows: Four friendlies KIA and seven NVA while enemy losses were three KIA one CIA.

3. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS DURING THE ATTACK AND EVACUATION:

a. 061025 February: Camp Lang Vei received an unknown number of enemy mortar rounds resulting in eight Camp Strike Force personnel being KIA. Counter mortar fires were placed on suspected enemy positions with unknown results.

b. 061810: An estimated 40 to 60 rounds of 152mm or 155mm artillery were received within the camp perimeter resulting in two Camp Strike Force personnel KIA and two bunkers damaged. Counter artillery fires were requested and received from Kho Sanh Combat Base with unknown results.

c. 070030: Camp Lang Vei reported it was under attack by an unknown number of tanks and infantry. It was stated that tanks were in the outer perimeter wire and that artillery and TAC Air had been requested.

d. 070100: Camp Lang Vei reported one "Spooky" on station in the vicinity of the camp. The VMSF channels at Detachment C-1 lost communications with Lang Vei. TAC Air was confirmed on the way by III MAF Hqs in Danang. "I" Corps Hqs reported that an additional Spooky was enroute to Lang Vei.

e. 070200: Camp Lang Vei reported that three or four tanks had been destroyed. A total of seven tanks had been seen by this time and were reported using searchlights to sweep the camp for possible targets.

f. 070240: Camp Lang Vei reported that there was one tank sitting on top of the tactical operations center. This tank had been destroyed. The camp also reported that the communications personnel were burning the commo material at this time.

g. 070320: Communications between Camp Lang Vei and "C" Company were lost. All the following messages were relayed from Kho Sanh Combat Base.

h. 070450: Tanks were reportedly departing Camp Lang Vei and taking up positions to the east of the camp. (NOTE: At 070540 "C" Company 5th SFG asked III MAF to implement the Camp Lang Vei contingency plan. "C" Company was informed that C.G. III MAF would not put the contingency plan into effect. One Battalion of marines had been requested. At 070545 one Mobile Strike Force Company from Danang was enroute to Quang Tri where it was to standby for a heliborne assault into Camp Lang Vei.)

i. 070630: A report from the USMC at Kho Sanh Combat Base indicated everything above ground at Camp Lang Vei had been destroyed.

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j. 070630: The USMC at Khe Sanh Combat Base reported that the senior US Army Special Forces Adviser, SFC Ashley with the 33rd Laotian Battalion had radio contact with the survivors located in the TOC at Camp Lang Vei.

k. 070740: Report received from Khe Sanh Combat Base that 15 personnel were alive in the TOC at Camp Lang Vei.

l. 070830: SFC Ashley departed the old camp area (XD 794361) enroute to new Camp Lang Vei with one company of Laotians. SFC Ashley reported that air strikes were still being run against the enemy in and around the camp.

m. 070942: SFC Ashley was directing air strikes against enemy held positions in Camp Lang Vei.

n. 071030: The Laotian element led by USASF Advisers reportedly had made five assaults on enemy positions attempting to reach Camp Lang Vei's TOC and the 15 survivors. Each attempt had been turned back by heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. On the last attempt the senior USASF Adviser, SFC Ashley, was critically wounded. At this time the Laotian element withdrew back to the old camp area.

o. 071300: Khe Sanh Combat Base reported TAC AIR and artillery still being used in support of the personnel remaining in Camp Lang Vei's TOC. The USASF Advisers with the Laotian element still had contact with the survivors in Lang Vei's TOC.

p. 071500: A 50 man C & C element was being briefed at FOB-3 Khe Sanh Combat Base in preparation for rescue of the 15 personnel remaining in Camp Lang Vei's TOC.

q. 071515: Khe Sanh Combat Base reported VC/NVA all along highway #9 between Camp Lang Vei and Khe Sanh Combat Base in ambush positions.

r. 071530: The senior USASF Adviser now located at old Lang Vei Camp had coordinated with the TAC AIR to drop their ordnance in the vicinity of the TOC in hopes of killing the enemy forces located above the TOC. After the aircraft dropped their ordnance, they were to make dummy passes across the camp in an attempt at keeping enemy heads down while the TOC survivors attempted to depart the camp. They were picked up at the camp main gate by Detachment C-1 VNSF S-3 in a vehicle without incident and reunited with other survivors at the old campsite.

s. 071630: Khe Sanh Combat Base reported choppers carrying C & C rescue element had departed for vicinity old Camp Lang Vei.

t. 071700: The C & C rescue element had linked up with Camp Lang Vei survivors at old campsite. Survivors were extracted to Khe Sanh by CH-46 and flown to Khe Sanh Combat Base.

u. 071030: Khe Sanh Combat Base reported survivors from Camp Lang Vei enroute back to Da Nang by fixed wing aircraft. C & C rescue element reported linking up with additional Camp Strike Force personnel employing escape and evasion techniques east of the new camp. Number of survivors enroute back to Da Nang totaled 92.

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v. The survivors from Camp Lang Vei, maintaining their previous tactical integrity and the same Detachment designation of A-101, have formed a new Mobile Strike Force company presently training at the Mobile Strike Force Headquarters, Da Nang RVN. 6

h. FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS:

a. The enemy attacked and over ran Camp Lang Vei with a force consisting of 12 tanks some of which were identified as (PT-76 Soviet Amphibious Type) and approximately 400 infantry troops of which one company is believed to have been sappers.

b. The enemy attack was supported by an estimated four 152mm artillery pieces and four 82mm mortars.

c. Enemy losses are estimated to have been seven tanks (confirmed) and two tanks (probable) and 250 infantry troops KIA.

d. Regular NVA units in mass have superior fire power to main force VC units and are therefore better suited to attacking fortified positions.

e. Despite Camp Lang Vei's inadequate anti tank defenses and lack of psychological conditioning for an armored attack, the CSF put up a spirited defense and did not break and run. Well over one half of the CSF died defending their positions, actually trying to fight tanks with MGs, carbines and rifles.

f. Camp Lang Vei's anti tank weapons consisted of two 106RR and 100 LAWs.

g. More emphasis should be placed on anti tank defenses by all Camp Strike Force Camps to include anti tank training for all personnel and the construction of tank obstacles.

h. Camp Strike Force Camps which have TACR's contiguous to other countries must have a TACR that extends out in all directions from the camp sufficiently far to insure the capability of fixing the enemy and providing early warning through continuous reconnaissance. The limited east-west operational area imposed by the RVN-Laotian border severely restricted this capability at Lang Vei. Tactical surprise was achieved by the introduction of a new weapons system from an unexpected direction.

i. The Mobile Strike Force company which had been moved to Quang Tri to reinforce the camp could not be displaced further due to lack of helicopters.

j. The camp defenses at Camp Lang Vei stopped the attack. It could not move beyond the camp toward Khe Sanh. The position could have been restored by one Mobile Strike Force company at the time of evacuation. It could have been restored earlier by the Laotian Battalion had they been only slightly aggressive. The restoration would have been of doubtful value due to the utter destruction of the camp.

k. COFRAM was fired on Camp Lang Vei three times during the morning of 7 February with unknown results.

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5. PERSONNEL RECAPITULATION:

<u>ASSIGNED</u> <u>ATTACHED & PFD</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>KIA/MIA</u>	<u>RETURNED TO</u> <u>GOVERNMENT CONTROL</u>
USASF 24	13	10	14
VNSF 14	3	5	9
CSF 282	29	165	117
NSF 161	32	34	127
INTERPRETERS 6	0	5	1
<u>487</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>219</u>	<u>268</u>

2 Incl

1. Intelligence Summary
2. Personal Statements

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9 INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY OF REPORTS AND INCIDENTS PRIOR TO THE ATTACK
ON LANG VEI A-101

1. During the past six months the enemy situation in the Khe Sanh-Lang Vei area was characterized by inactivity of major enemy units with very few contacts. During the month of December enemy reconnaissance and counter-reconnaissance activity increased noticeably, and usually reliable sources indicated large enemy units were being concentrated in the area. At this time it was considered probable that major ground action against CIEG and USMC installations in the Khe Sanh-Lang Vei area would be conducted as part of the Tri-Thien Winter-Spring Campaign.

2. Intelligence reports from Lang Vei indicated a definite increase in enemy activity during the month of January. There were reports of enemy units crossing the Se Pone River from Laos into Viet Nam, and a captured document mentioned division, regiment, and battalion sized units. By the middle of the month, one agent had reported that an unidentified regiment had moved into the A-101 TAOR. During this time there were several usually reliable reports of enemy activity within the TAOR.

3. Along with the agent reports, there was an increase in the enemy's probing of camp defenses. Camp operations began to make contact with small enemy units. On 24 January, III MAF COC reported that a USAF FAC had sighted five tanks in the vicinity of XD 653374. An airstrike was called, and the FAC reported one tank destroyed and the others moving west into trees along HWY #9. On 30 January, a security patrol from the discovered a road capable of supporting heavy vehicle traffic, running northeast along a stream bed XD 755354 to XD 782382.

4. On 30 January, Luong Dinh Du of the 8th Bn, 66th Regt, 304th Div, rallied at Camp Lang Vei. Subject stated that his battalion was at half strength due to the attack against Khe Sanh District on 21 January, and from subsequent airstrikes and artillery missions. Subject also stated that the battalion XO and one squad of sappers reconnoitered the Lang Vei Camp on the night of 28 January. Their mission was to pinpoint weapons location and to study camp defenses. Subject's company had been alerted to attack Lang Vei on two occasions; both times the attack was cancelled. Subject stated that his battalion would attack the camp in the near future. The reports and incidents listed above indicate that the camp defenders had reason to expect a probable large scale ground attack, possibly supported by armored vehicles. As result, the camp was supplied with LAWs, and the defenders trained in their use. Approximately ten of the CIEG fired familiarization. Over half the Americans had fired a LAW prior to the attack.

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LTC DANIEL F. SCHUNGERL

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Since we acquired the Lao Bn (BV-33) plus some 2200 dependents, it was my policy to keep one of the Company's three field grade officers at Lang Vei to coordinate the somewhat complex tactical and refugee situation. I relieved LTC Roadley, my XO, the afternoon of 6 February.

At about 1800 on 6 Feb Lang Vei was subjected to a rather intense mortar and artillery barrage. We asked for counterfire from Khe Sanh Combat Base (KSCB) and delivered counterfire from the camp.

Myself, 1LT Quy (LDB S3) and 1LT Quan, (LDB Camp Commander) inspected all defensive positions at last light (about 2000) and then I turned in. I had some difficulty getting our northern most OP manned that night, but got SFC Lindewald's 1st platoon out there, finally.

At about 070015 I was awakened and told that the camp was being attacked by tanks. I assured myself that this was true, instructed CPT Willoughby to call for air and artillery support on Lang Troa to the point at which the high speed approach enters the camp (104 Co Area). I also instructed that he request a flare ship and ask for everything through parallel channels (KSCB and C Co). Then I went up to organize tank killer detail, about 070045.

By this time, the 106 RR was manned by SGT Holt and delivering effective fire on the point at which the road from Lang Troa enters the camp. I collected the following personnel to assist me in containing the tanks that penetrated 104 Co: 1LT Longgroar, 1LT Quy, SGT Fragos, SP5 Mc Murry, and later, 1LT Wilkins.

Initially, I sent Fragos and Mc Murry after all the L's they could carry, plus hand grenades. By 0100, the 106 RR fire had knocked out two tanks at the wire, but two had penetrated and one was practically on top of us. I am not sure how many times he was struck by LAWs, but at least five were required to immobilize him. On each impact, there would be a great shower of orange sparks. When the crew survivors (3) crawled out, 1LT Quy and I killed them with grenades and SA fire. They had AK 47's. By this time the second tank had flanked the immobilized and dead first tank. It closed to about ten meter of our position, buttoned up and firing the main armament and CO-AX. By this time 1LT Wilkins had joined us; we were taking cover by some 55 gallon drums filled with rocks. I sent 1LT Longgroar back down the TOC stairs to get some more LAWs and grenades. Meanwhile, the main armament hit our barrels and caved in the entrance to the TOC. I later learned that Longgroar reported me as dead at the time, and I can see why. Of the four of us still fighting the tank at that time, only 1LT Quy was unscathed and keeping up a heavy volume of fire against the NVN ground elements who followed the tanks in the attempt to outflank us. I am sure he saved our lives. 1LT Wilkins was knocked unconscious and crushed between the barrels, SP5 Mc Murry was gravely wounded. He couldn't see and both of his hands had been mangled. I was knocked head over heels by the concussion, but sustained only a light wound in the right hip and a cut to my left cheek and ear. As the crew attempted to escape 1LT Quy and I killed them. Then in a period of comparative quiet I took Mc Murry around to a pile of sandbags and tried to make him comfortable. He looked to me as if he was out of it. Then I got Wilkins awake and got him situated. He was beginning to come around. I consulted with 1LT Quy and he suggested we hide in

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a shall crater until dawn. I said "okay" but events overtook us then, and I lost track of 1LT Quy. Another tank had approached from the rear. I threw two grenades under it and something (probably a LAW) hit it from the rear. The hatch popped open and flame billowed out. No one made it out of that tank. It was in otherwise perfect condition and parked right by the TOC tower. By this time (about 0300) there were plenty of NVA around, in small groups on top of the hill. I had two magazines of M16 and two M26 grenades left. 1LT Wilkins was now completely conscious and called down the TOC tower to let us in. I wasn't too keen on this because I suspected we would have a better chance if we weren't pinned down. So I took Wilkins and we crept down to the team house. I deposited him behind the half finished bar, and then stood in the middle of the building where I could observe both entrances. I cut the inner tubes on the doors so they would stand open. There were still intermittent flares going off and I had a pretty good view. At 0330, I saw a party of five NVA, three with AK-47's and two with satchel charges approaching the North door of the team house. I told Wilkins to keep quiet and I would have to shoot them. They approached all bunched up. When they were five meters away I shot them all with one magazine. That left one magazine and two grenades. Then the team house got a satchel charge and small arms fire. I was hit in the right lower leg, but not enough to immobilize me. I went back to Wilkins (who was weaponless) and briefed him, telling him I thought we had better move out. He was lucid by this time and suggested we take cover under the dispensary until daylight. I agreed, and we proceeded there without incident, arriving about 0430 7 Feb. We hid there during a period that the NVA, a platoon I would estimate, were stopping around in the dispensary, knocking over bottles and raising hell in general. I overheard snatches of conversation, one between a runner from battalion and a company commander (Dai Uy, Dai Doi Truong). Before daylight we ceased to hear anything from them and the people left the dispensary.

With dawn came some good air support (0700). I could tell by the ground fire coming from around us that it wasn't time for us to come out yet. The air kept up until about 0930 and we hobbled out from under the dispensary, using extreme caution. There were two burned out tanks just west of the dispensary that I hadn't seen before that I assume were knocked out by air. We emerged, and I tried to signal a FAC. He wagged his wings in recognition. I thought perhaps at this time we were the only two alive on the hill.

Since neither Wilkins nor myself were walking very well at this time, we took it slow, trying to start every vehicle we came to. None worked. Then we spotted some CRP and CSF. The CRP suggested we join him in his bunker. We agreed and were being assisted in this direction when we were taken under fire again. At this time I was hit in the right upper leg hard enough to put me down. Wilkins made it to the bunker. The CSF helped me on down the road to the gate, where I met SFC Craig, who practically carried me to the Lao BN CP, where I received first aid.

From this point until evacuation I operated the radio and coordinated with the TOC and FAC in preparation for the evacuation of the remaining personnel.

/s/ Daniel F. Schungel
/t/ DANIEL F. SCHUNGEL
LTC, Infantry
Commanding

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We received 40-50 rounds of 152mm artillery in the afternoon of the 6th. All rounds landed in the southern perimeter wire, mostly in the area of 104 Company (southeast corner of camp). At about 1930, the CIDG in 104 Co's area reported hearing noises in Lang Troai (XD 780 344). They said that it sounded like engines running. At about the same time, the Mobile Strike Force OP west of the camp reported hearing noises. Sergeants Hanna and Lindewald were on this OP. At around 2100 hrs three trip flares went off in the area of the Mobile Strike Force OP. Illumination was fired with negative results. Next, around 2200, a trip flare went off in 104 Co's area. When the first trip flares went off around 2100 in the area of the Mobile Strike Force OP, first the OP opened up with their small arms and automatic weapons, and pretty soon the entire camp had joined in. The same thing happened at 2200 when the trip flare went off in 104 Co's area. They opened up with small arms and automatic weapons fire and the entire camp joined in. The first indication of an actual attack came at approximately 2330 hours. At this time 104 company reported that there were enemy troops in the wire. 104 company opened up with small arms and automatic weapons fire. Next, the MSF OP started receiving incoming mortar rounds. My observer in the tower of the TOC reported seeing lights on the road leading to Lang Troai. At this time, I alerted the artillery in Khe Sanh and also C Company at Danang. About 15 minutes later, my observer informed that there were two tanks sitting in our outer perimeter were below 104 company. They were sweeping the hill with their searchlights. I went up out of the TOC at this time and verified that there were indeed two tanks setting there with their searchlights on sweeping the hillside looking for our camp positions. I was informed through an interpreter that 104 Company was fighting with enemy troops in their wire. We finally got our artillery mission 15 minutes after I had called for it. By this time, however, the tanks had already gotten into the wire. We had the tanks pinpointed for the artillery on the original mission and my biggest complaint was the delay we experienced in getting the first mission fired. If we had received it in time, we could have knocked out the tanks in the wire. We were manning our LAU's and our 106's. 104 Company lasted about 45 minutes, until a tank got into their area and started destroying their position with its main battle gun. Two tanks were knocked out in the wire with our 106 and they were sitting there smoking. Another tank came up by those two, making a total of three that I had seen so far. This other tank pulled around the two that were destroyed and rolled into 104 Company. He was blowing bunkers apart and finally 104 Company fell. These troops pulled into our inner perimeter and the positions which they had left were occupied by the NVA. The tank remained in 104 Company's area. The next report I received was that there was a tank coming up Highway 9 just below Supply bunker number 2. At about the same time I was receiving reports that three tanks were coming up Highway 9 just below the MSF OP. I also received a report that there were two tanks setting in the drop zone between Highway 9 and Lang Vei village. The tank that had been in 104 Company's area eventually moved on into 101 Company's area. He may have been the one that came up Highway 9 below supply bunker number two but I remember later that I saw no break in the wire to indicate that this was the same tank that had moved to Highway 9. Now, another tank came up behind the two that were destroyed in the wire. He pulled on through 104 Company's area and on up to the top of the hill. His gun was pointing west across the camp. At the same time a tank came up from the West and began to operate in 102 Company's area. This is probably the same one that was observed coming up Highway 9 below supply bunker number two. While this tank was working in 102 Company, I received reports that enemy troops had surrounded the MSF OP west of the camp, that the enemy was manning positions in 104 Company's area, and also that

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enemy troops were coming across the wire on the north side of the camp. Just before 104 Company fell, I observed what I thought to be an enemy soldier with a manpack flamethrower on his back. I never actually saw it employed, but there were fires going and this particular individual was standing between two of the fires. I saw no similar apparatus being carried by any of the other enemy troops. The only enemy troops I had seen up to this time were the ones in 104 Company's area. I would estimate about a platoon in strength was occupying positions in 104 Company's area and perhaps another squad of sappers just on the inner perimeter on the east end of the camp. The troops that reportedly came from the north and west I never saw. The troops on the northern side of the camp were reported to me by LTC Schungel. The troops on the west end of the camp were reported by the commander of 103 Company and by Sergeant Hanna. Sergeant Hanna just said that they were surrounded on their OP. The POL dump was gone. Tac Air, "Covoy" FACs, and Spooky were all on station. We were receiving good support from Khe Sanh at this time, I guess about 0045 hours. I was in, on, or around the TOC at all times. I had six wounded Americans in the TOC with me. The flares from the camp had stopped, and I had requested some from Khe Sanh. The 81mm mortar pit on the East side of the camp was knocked out. The 4.2 mortar pit on the west side of the camp was knocked out.... The remaining Americans were manning the two 50 caliber machine guns and the 106. The other 106, on the East side of the camp, had been knocked out at about 0045 hours. A tank knocked it out. We were employing IAWs from 2400 hours until 0130 hours. Our 106's were employed from 2340 hours until 0115 hours at which time the last 106 was knocked out by a tank. This 106 was on the west end of the camp. At this time, enemy sappers were busy with satchel charges in 104 and 101 companies areas. The 104 company personnel who had withdrawn into our inner perimeter were firing on the sappers. One of the tanks came from the west, went across 104 company and into 101 company and blasted the bunkers. Next, a tank from the west took up station to the rear of the 81mm mortar pit on the east end of the camp. This one knocked out the 81mm mortar and the 106 that I mentioned earlier. We got him with a IAW; however, he continued to fire his 50 caliber. Another tank appeared - this was the fifth one - and came up within ten meters of the main entrance to the TOC. LTC Schungel, LT Longspear, and I were standing by the door. They were manning IAW's and I was adjusting fire. I went into the TOC. About 1 1/2 minutes later, LT Longspear came down also and about one minute later the tank shattered the entrance to the TOC where LTC Schungel had been standing. The tank remained out there for about 15 minutes. He demolished the entrance to the TOC and was working on the tower. At this time Sergeant Early was wounded. He was the observer in the tower of the TOC. A tank on the west end of the camp pulled up on the main road running down the center of the camp and knocked out our last 106 on the west end of the camp. He started rolling up toward the TOC. We had two tanks on top of the hill now. The tanks which Sergeant Hanna reported as coming up Highway 9 in the vicinity of the Mike Force OP apparently didn't enter the camp perimeter wire, but just sat outside instead. At this time both the entrance and exit of the TOC were blocked and to my knowledge the personnel in the TOC were the only remaining U.S. personnel in the camp. The time was about 0300. Personnel in the TOC included myself, LT Longspear, Sergeant Phillips, Early, Fragos, Moreland, and Dooms.

Down there also were the VNSF camp commander, the VNSF Sergeant Major, the Company commander of 104 company, my interpreter Minh, and a CIDG comco man. The tanks finished their mopping up. One was sitting on top of the TOC and remained there about 20 minutes. While he was on top of us, he continued to fire his armament, both the main gun and the automatic weapon. At the same time satchel charges were being thrown down the main entrance and the tower. Our communications

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with the outside were gone. The stairway and the tower were knocked out. Satchel charges and grenades came in sporadically for the next four hours. Just before we received the satchels, a voice came down saying something like: "This is LT Wilkins, who's down there?" Immediately thereafter an automatic weapon was fired down the tower. Bullets ricocheted all over. Whoever had called down the tower spoke very good English, but I didn't know if it was Wilkins or not. Wilkins told me later that he had called down to us. A few minutes after Wilkins called another voice called down. People close to the voice said that it was Specialist Mc Murry. This voice also was followed by automatic fire into the TOC. We were receiving satchel charges and grenades. I had extinguished all lights in the TOC. Commo was lost with all personnel on the hill and with C Company. We still had contact with Khe Sanh. This was about 0400. As I said, we then received four hours of satchel charges, thermite grenades, gas grenades and 120 type grenades. The thermite grenade was thrown down the tower at about 0600, and it started a fire. Immediately after it was thrown down the tower, gas grenades - CS or CM - were thrown in on us, followed by satchel charges from the East and West end of the TOC. The fire wasn't spreading because there was very little ventilation down there. I guess it lasted about 20 minutes. The gas stayed around for a long time. I gave my mask to someone else and I kept my face very close to the floor to avoid the gas. When the thermite and gas grenades went off, the sappers on top of the TOC called down through the tower and the stairway in Vietnamese. They were saying: "We are going to blow up the bunker, so give up." The indigenous troops all surrendered. All I could see were black shapes moving toward the door, but LT Longgear moved to the door and saw the indigenous troops at the top of the stairs being stripped down. All their weapons were taken and a couple of the indigenous troops were stripped down to their shorts. Talk was going back and forth between them and their captors in Vietnamese. One of the prisoners was shot on the spot by the enemy. The weapon sounded like an AK-47. LT Longgear came back. The indigenous prisoners were marched to the top of the TOC, and we could hear talking in Vietnamese. It lasted for ten or fifteen minutes. We then heard much automatic weapons fire, and assumed the prisoners had been killed. However, the next morning, I saw no bodies. During the night I remember observing one truck, 2 1/2 ton type and not one of ours, driving down the road through the camp toward the exit in the direction of Lang Troai. I fired on it from the TOC with unknown results. It appeared to be carrying bodies. Trucks seemed to be moving back and forth across the camp until about 0530 or 0600. At about 0430, the FVA started digging a hole down the North side of the TOC. Satchel charges and grenades were having no effect on the inside of the TOC. They were apparently digging a hole six or seven feet deep, close to the vent. The digging stopped and there was much talking going on. Another grenade was tossed in, and then the satchel charges in the hole went off, blowing out a portion of the north wall. It left a hole about six feet across and four feet high. The enemy threw fragmentation grenade through this hole. At about 0705, I was wounded by a fragmentation grenade and I passed out at about 0800. We had been trying to get our FAC 74 back in operation. Commo with Khe Sanh had been lost twice. We were not in commo with Sergeant Ashley and the Laotian Battalion at the old camp at this time. The last contact I had with anyone on the top of the camp was when I heard Sergeant Tiroch on the radio saying: "I have one round left. The tanks are coming right at us." That was our last commo with the top of the hill and came around 0200. When I came to, we had reestablished commo with Sergeant Craig at the Laotian position, and with FAC. I came to at around 1100 hours. I learned that we had been in contact with FAC for two hours. I was informed that Sergeant Ashley and a reaction force were trying to reach us. They were in the vicinity of Supply bunker number two and were on forth try. Ashley was taking small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire and

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had to pull back. He made another try and made it to the East 81mm mortar pit. A large volley of automatic weapons and small arms fire came along the top of the hill. Communications was lost with Ashley. Sergeant Tiroch came up on the FAC 25. I got on the horn and was talking to my team sergeant and to LTC Schungel, who were at the old camp Lang Vei. Sergeant Tiroch with the reaction force was somewhere between the two camps and was receiving incoming artillery. He had to withdraw. I talked to FAC and he said he had air support on call, fifteen or twenty minutes out. We devised a plan for an escape attempt. We knew there was still automatic weapons and small arms fire on top of the hill, and to the best of our knowledge the enemy was sitting on top of the TOC. In twenty minutes AIE Skyriders came in and I told the FAC where I wanted the ordnance. They dropped 250 lb. bombs thirty to 100 feet from our position. After they had expended their bombs, they made runs with the 20mm. All firing ceased from on top of the hill. We were still getting occasional grenades thrown in on us. I now heard firing coming from the north and east portion of the camp, and I request bombs, napalm, and strafing runs to be placed on those locations. I got the troops together. All but two of them were wounded. Moreland had been hit when the sappers blew the north wall. We tried to get him up but he was frantic and began flinging his fists and arms, kicking and yelling at the top of his lungs. With the amount of injured people that we had on our hands, the decision was made to leave Moreland there. We lost commo with the FAC and the 20mm stopped. We climbed out of the TOC and received fire from the east end of the camp. We moved out in the direction of supply bunker number two, filtering out in ones and twos. Sergeant Phillips and I carried Sergeant Early out. LT Quy, VSBF, met us at the front gate with a jeep. We put everybody in the jeep and went back to the old camp. Time: about 1600. The old camp was receiving mortar fire too. We requested the FAC to place bombs on the entire hill with the exception of the TOC, and they did. LTC Schungel was trying to get medevac ships in. Apparently he had been working on it for quite some time. I got the breakdown on what actually happened and then we prepared for the medevac, patching up to wounded. Marine CH-53's, gunships, AIE Skyriders, and jets were on station. Major Quamo's chopper came in and LTC Schungel and three men who couldn't walk were placed on this chopper. Then the big ships came in together with the C & C element which proceeded to set up the perimeter. The Laotians and my troops were being evacuated. The exfiltration was being coordinated. Major Quamo handled the entire operation. At around 1630 or 1700, I was medevaced on the 6th or 7th chopper. To recap, I saw a total of 5 tanks, 1 truck, and about 40-50 NVA during the attack. I heard about a total of 11 tanks as well as enemy troop concentrations on the northeast and west sides of the camp. I observed breaches in the camp wire on the South and North sides. The south breach appeared to be made by tanks and the north breach by troops. I saw three bodies when I was leaving the hill. Two were CIDG and I would say one was an NVA. He was wearing a gray khaki uniform, but had no weapon or headgear. The two CIDG had their carbines laying by them. I didn't fire any IAN's, but LTC Schungel told me later that he had five IAN's of top of the hill that wouldn't fire. I saw one fired. It scored a first round hit on the lower turret. It hit at an oblique angle and I guess it didn't do any damage. I heard LT Wilkins say that some IAN's didn't fire. I also heard that two tanks were knocked out with IAN's.

/s/ Frank C. Willoughby
/t/ FRANK C. WILLOUGHBY
CPT, 05320257

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I arrived in Lang Vei the afternoon of 5 February for the purpose of repairing the Special Forces air strip. At 1800 hours 6 February the new Special Forces camp at Lang Vei received heavy bombardment from enemy artillery. 40-50 rounds were counted landing within the perimeter of the camp in approximately one hour time. At 2330 hours 6 February the camp came under heavy attack by enemy artillery, mortar and small arms fire. I was in supply bunker #1. At 0100 hours 7 February, I observed an enemy tank drive in front of my position heading in the direction of the TOC. I went to the rear of the bunker to secure some grenades that were located in the American living quarters. My position took a direct hit from an enemy artillery round while I was trying to locate said grenades. I immediately vacated the now destroyed bunker and proceeded to the emergency medical bunker located across from supply bunker #1. I had just reached the medical bunker when an enemy tank stopped in front of the entrance of said bunker and fired on round point blank into the stairway, enemy grenades were then placed into the remaining opening. Another tank had positioned itself in front of the rear exit of the medical bunker and it fired into the rear door. The two tanks then departed. I observed another tank drive past the front entrance of my position heading toward the TOC, this tank was followed by about 50 enemy troops. I decided to remain in the bunker until morning and then see what the situation was. It appeared that the enemy had control of the area around my position if not the entire camp. From about 0230 hours to 1600 hours, the tanks were quite active in the area. At 0630 hours 7 February, all small arms fire had quit and no tanks were seen or heard. I did observe enemy troops walking and talking in my area; they appeared normal. I figured that the camp was now controlled by the enemy. I planned to wait till night and try to E to Khe Sanh. At about 0800 hours American air strikes were started on the camp itself. The enemy would constantly harass the planes with automatic weapons and small arms fire from within the camp. At 1400 hours I observed helicopters circling the camp, this led me to believe that there were Americans still alive in the TOC and that they had radio contact with the planes. Between 1400 hours and 1700 hours the bombing and strafing increased. At 1700 hours I left the medical bunker and ran to the TOC in hopes that some Americans would be in that area. I drew automatic weapons and small arms fire from my rear only. I reached the TOC and found that the Americans had either left prior to my arrival or had been killed. The TOC was completely destroyed and a large hole blown through one side. One American was found buried in the debris; he appeared dead. I immediately went outside and saw a helicopter leave the air strip located near the old Special Forces camp about 1/2 mile away. I then proceeded in the most direct route to the air strip. I received small arms fire from the top of the camp, but once I was over the side of the hill on which the camp was situated I did not encounter anymore enemy fire. At the air strip I found four Americans from C P C detachment and was told that a helicopter would pick us up in a few minutes. (During my stay at the S.F. camp I did not see any enemy bodies, I did see three or four CIDG bodies, one located a few meters behind the medical bunker and the others located in the road going from the new S.F. camp to the air strip. I did not see any enemy tanks destroyed in the area). I was transported from the air strip to Khe Sanh where I received medical attention for a minor wound received by the tank that destroyed the rear exit of the medical bunker. I left Khe Sanh about 1800 hours and arrived in Danang around 2000 hours 7 February.

/s/ Thomas E. Todd
/t/ THOMAS E. TODD
1LT, 05.233.936

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At approximately 1800 on 6 February 1968, Camp Lang Vei started to receive an artillery barrage. At first it was my thought that this was just a continuation of the harrassing fire that we had received during the last week or so, the 5th being without any incident. I was in the TOC at the time the rounds started to come in. The initial rounds hit in 104 company; SGT Frages went there to aid the wounded (only two WIA). I linked up with him and we made an attempt together to find the direction from which the rounds came by analyzing shell holes and using the lensatic compass. We informed the TOC that the rounds came from VIC XD760325. This is the only place we saw flashes, but over the HT-1 we heard other observers call additional locations. After waiting for a few minutes in order to adjust artillery I got frustrated, since no friendly artillery was to be heard or seen, and went to the 4.2 position approximately 30 meters to the West of the TOC. LTC Schungel and 1LT Longgear were already in this position. We put the 4.2 in as near a firing position as possible toward the enemy guns. Then using maximum charge, 1LT Longgear passed the H.E. rounds to LTC Schungel, he passed them on to me and I dropped them in the tube. We got the idea that we may have come pretty close to the enemy guns because in dropping a total of 6-8 rounds, after each round a stop up of activity was noted from the other side and we'd got three or four behind and in front of the 4.2. We also heard many more rounds going over the camp. I assume the majority of the rounds went to Khe Sanh, but I did notice a number of them exploding VIC XD797379. This puzzled us, but it also seemed humorous to us because at least, we could see that every thing wasn't going exactly right with the enemy guns. I don't know exactly when Khe Sanh started to return fire on the locations we had given. It seems to me that it was after we had taken the majority of 40 or 60 rounds. From these anti-artillery barrages SFC Ashley (on the old camp) reported a secondary explosion VIC XD770320. About this time the guns from Laos quit firing at Lang Vei, although rounds were still going into Khe Sanh for some time. At about 1900 or 1930 all the enemy fire ceased.

I went back to the TOC, which was my working and sleeping area and kept busy until 2300. I was aware of some sort of trouble with SFC Lindewald's MSF platoon. It seems that the indigenous troops did not want to stay on the OP because they had seen beaucoup VC. The exact outcome of this is unknown to me, although I know SFC Lindewald and SFC Hanna were on the OP with a number of indigenous troops at the time of attack. I went to sleep at about 2300 and was awakened at about 2400 or some minutes later. I don't know who awakened me, but the sentence that stuck in my mind was "there are tanks in the wire." I ran to the 4.2 mortar adjacent to the alternate commo bunker and started to fire illumination towards the Southeast, where tanks had been reported. Intermittently we dropped a few rounds of H.E., Thinking that there was possibly a ground assault element behind the tanks. At this time SFC Dooms, SSG Thompson, SFC Burke and myself were in the 4.2 pit. We were joined about 15 minutes later by SFC Craig and SP5 Phillips who had been hit by fragments in the face and were both almost deaf. It must have been around 0030 that I saw SFC Holt at the direction of the tanks. Since there were plenty of people in the 4.2 pit at this time and SFC Holt seemed to be alone, I ran to his position to assist him by loading the projectiles. This was actually the first time that I had seen the tanks and I noticed by the illumination that two of them were sitting still and burning right at the outer perimeter. Another tank was moving around the two wrecks. The illumination went out at this time and SFC Holt was unable to see his target through the sight. Seconds later another illumination popped and SFC Holt apparently got on target, because he fired the 106 and the which was now some distance inside the perimeter took a hit and went up in flames.

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At this time I noticed that there was only one round of ammo left at the position. I loaded it into the chamber and SFC Holt hit the last tank one more time to finish the kill, if necessary. This must have been at 0100; both of us left the gun. SFC Holt ran to the ammo bunker to look for LAW's and I ran back to the 4.2 bunker. This is the last time I consciously saw SFC Holt. As I returned to the 4.2 pit a tank was approaching from the East side heading for the TOC. Somehow I got a LAW into my hand; I don't know who gave it to me. It was in firing position with exception of the safety at the front of the rear sight. I pulled the safety forward and attempted to fire the LAW, but it failed to fire. At this time the tank had stopped about 100 meters from the TOC and was firing its MG. Then the interpreter Tiep called from the top of the team house mess hall that a tank was moving West towards his position on highway 9. 1LT Wilkins had two LAWs and got to the Eastern edge of the top and was preparing to fire at the tank. At this time there was a lot of confusion because some unknown Vietnamese started pointing at the tank saying "CIDG". We were happy as could be for a moment because we actually believed that the CIDG had captured the tank. But when it started to move at us again we decided very quickly that since CIDG had no training in driving a tank it must be enemy. 1LT Wilkins fired a LAW at it hitting it in the front end with unknown results. The tank stopped again, apparently to find out where he was being attacked from. 1LT Wilkins attempted to fire the second LAW and it failed to fire. The tank started to move again and everyone went in search of LAWs. SSG Thompson started to shoot M-79 grenades at it with unnoticeable effects. I threw two or three grenades at the tanks tracks and rear and with unnoticeable effect. Other people also threw grenades. SFC Burke came up with a number of LAWs from somewhere. 1LT Wilkins took three of them and fired them at the tank now located adjacent to the dispensary. Two of the LAWs misfired, one struck the tank on the rear of the turret. 1LT Wilkins then took two more LAWs and followed the tank as it moved toward 102 company on the western side of the camp. One of the LAW warheads detonated in the left tread of the tank with unnoticeable effect and the other one missed the tank completely. 1LT Wilkins came back for more LAWs and continued to follow the tank. At this time an artillery round landed in the POL dump west of the 4.2 pit and set it on fire. The tanks outline could be seen directly behind it. SSG Brooks and myself ran to the top of the teamhouse and got the 50 cal. MG with an enormous belt of armor piercing ammo and set it up and began firing at the tank and saw some sort of secondary explosion in or behind the fire, but I couldn't be sure of the results of the rounds. At this time (it must have been 0200 or 0230) we started receiving MG fire from the tank that had by now closed with the TOC and already had blown away the stairwell with its MAJOR caliber. SFC Craig, SSG Thompson, SSG Brooks, SPL Dooms, VMSF SGM DAY and some other indigenous were all crowded in the 4.2 pit now. We were undecided on what to do for a while, then ran and crawled for the western side of the team house. Approx 20-30 CIDG were approaching in a single line from 102 company area another tank or armored personnel carrier had come out of 103 company and was heading past the western supply bunker toward the 4.2 pit. It was also firing its MG. We came to a decision to E & E through the northern perimeter, since this seemed to be the only place where there was no visible activity. As far as I could see there was SFC Craig, SSG Thompson, SFC Burke, SGM Day, myself and from 40-50 CIDG & NSF. We had made our way through the inner wire barrier at once and were in the process of going over the triple concertina when our group started receiving heavy MG fire from the eastern portion of the camp. Everybody except SFC Craig, myself and about 10 NSF apparently got over the wire barriers and outside. We stayed since spooky and artillery illumination was still lighting up the camp and in turn our escape route. We remained in shallow ditches for about five minutes until the illumination ceased for a time and then rushed through the wire and went about 100 meters further into a clump of bamboo. We stayed there for approximately fifteen minutes to one half

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an hour until CHU's were dropping all around us. SFC Craig, myself and one MSF were hit by some type of fragments. At this time the remainder of the MSF with us took off and SFC Craig and myself were alone. We moved another 100 or 200 meters and found a sort of dry creekbed or washout and stayed at the edge of it for the remainder of the night. We could still hear the tank's engines in the camp to our rear and a constant sound of explosions and MG fire. At about 0330 an arc light started in the direction of Laos and apparently was moving towards the western edge of camp. Not too much later a jet aircraft dropped from 3-5 bombs in our vicinity. One of the bombs threw clumps of dirt and shrapnel all around our position. It seemed that around 0400 the activity in camp was slowing down, but small arms and MG fire still persisted around our hiding place. Presumed by us to be CIDG, MSF, NVA firing at each other. We heard the firing and some movement around our position for the rest of the night. At daybreak firing became sporadic, until firing started up again in the direction of the camp. We then had high hopes that the camp was still in friendly hands and started to move back to a position where we could observe the camp. At this time we saw (what we later found out to be SFC Ashley's assault) a group of people on the eastern slope of the camp. Somehow we decided that they were friendly and stepped out into the open waving our hands. Since we didn't receive any fire we moved to the east to attempt to link up. Along the way I saw one dead NVA in the wire near a blown away section. As we came up on highway 9 from the north, I saw a number of people along the road sitting down and facing toward the camp. At this time I got the scare of my life because all I could see was NVA caps and AK-47's. Looking closer I noticed that there were also camouflaged suits and carbines and BAR's. Then I remembered that the Laotians also wore hats and had a number AK-47's. As we stepped out on the road, we saw SFC Ashley on the radio, SP4 Johnson and SGT Allen. We joined them in the next assault on 101 company area. There were approximately one squad of NVA in the bunkers between 101 company and the TOC. They were throwing grenades and apparently had a MG and some other automatic weapons. We tried a head on assault the first time, but as soon as we received a burst of automatic fire the Laotians broke and ran making it impossible for us to continue the assault. As we withdrew to allow the FAC to place airstrikes on the area, I saw LTC Schungel limping down highway 9 inside camp being aided by two CIDG. SGT Allen and myself went after him and brought him the remaining distance outside the perimeter. After the completion of the airstrike, we went up again to assault the NVA's position only to be met by the same amount of firepower. Although this time SGT Allen had taken an element along the right flank. Of course, our "fearless" troops ran again. At this point SFC Ashley decided to get a 57mm RK from the Laotians in the old camp and attempt to drive the NVA out of their positions; in the meantime, I saw three CIDG and 1LT Wilkins coming along highway 9 near the CRP I barracks. I got four or five Laotians to aid the CIDG and I helped 1LT Wilkins toward the gate and took him back to the old camp in the jeep that had been brought from the old camp. During this time, SP4 Johnson was shooting the 57mm at the bunkers and SFC Ashley's crew had made another assault. When I returned, they were on the bottom of the hill again. SFC Ashley was calling for more strafing runs and bombs. Then we went up again. This time I found an abandoned 60mm mortar and with the assistance of SP4 Johnson dropped three H.E. and one WP on the enemy position about 50 meters away. The next H.E. round misfired so we left the mortar and continued the assault. SFC Ashley was in the center, SP4 Johnson on the left flank and SGT Allen and myself on the right flank. We were making progress in driving the NVA back and had winged a few with automatic weapons fire and grenades when the Laotians pulled out on us again. They had seen SFC Ashley get hit and decided to run again. SGT Allen and myself started to drag SFC Ashley away from the place where he had been hit, out of the line of fire. During this time the NVA cut loose with everything they had. The VNSF, who at this time somewhere to our rear

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finally got some Laotians together after our begging for help. They aided SGT Allen in removing SFC Ashley the remainder of the way. SPl Johnson, who had joined us from the left flank, and myself covered the withdrawal of the carrying party. 20

We got SFC Ashley into the jeep (still alive by mouth to mouth respiration by SGT Allen) and took him to the old camp for pick up by the MEDEVAC which I had requested thru LTC Schungel. SFC Ashley was still in the jeep and SPl Johnson was giving him mouth to mouth respiration when artillery rounds from Laos started to come in to keep the helicopter from landing. One round landed 10-15 meters from us knocking out SPl Johnson, killing SFC Ashley, and putting a piece of shrapnel in my wrist. The time was about 1100 on the 7th. The old camp received continued artillery and mortar fire. At about 1400 the group from the TOC effected their break out under aircover. Helicopters started to come in under mortar and artillery fire at about 1630 and extracted us to Khe Sanh.

/s/ Peter Tiroch
/t/ PETER TIROCH
SSG E6, RA 17 584 211

EMANUEL E. PHILLIPS

At approximately 1800 hours 6 February 1968, the camp received 40-50 rounds of estimated 155mm artillery from Vicinity Co Roc MTN in Laos. Fire missions were supplied by Marines on two suspected positions. A secondary explosion was reported Vic XD 733324. We were unable to get a FAC.

MSF platoon was manning the OP to the West of camp reported several times during evening the presence of large numbers of NVA to the northwest and south of their position. The USASF with the platoon (SFC Linderwald and Hanna) reported by radio that they personally had seen no enemy.

As A-101 radio supervisor, my alert position and sleeping quarters were located in the TOC. I was awakened at approximately midnight and told that there were tanks advancing on the camp's southern perimeter. I first made sure that all the USASF were alerted. Then contacted Marine artillery and requested fire on our southern perimeter, reference the camp's night defensive fire plan. Simultaneously, SFC Hanna reported the OP as being under heavy mortar and automatic weapons attack. Two artillery missions were called in defense of the OP before radio contact was lost. At last radio contact was regained with the OP. SFC Hanna reported that SFC Linderwald was gravely wounded, and that the OP was still under heavy attack.

After losing radio contact with the OP, under CPT Willoughby's direction, all efforts were directed toward stopping the tanks and coordinating air support. By the time, five or six artillery missions had been delivered by the Marines on the southern approaches to the camp and had been adjusted up to the outer wire. Tanks had been reported to be controlling the 104 Co Area (S.E. Corner) and NVA were reported in the bunkers. A large troop concentration was reported on the northern perimeter and VT as called.

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Two tanks were reported knocked out at the camp's southern entrance. All USASF personnel were attempting to engage the tanks with the weapons available except for Command and Commo pers inside the TOC. 106 RR, LAWs, and 50 cal AP were used by the USASF personnel. CIDG used grenades, 30 cal MG and 57mm RR.

During the battle, six tanks were reported to the TOC as being disabled. Eight USASF personnel became trapped in the TOC when a tank pulled on top of it. Under its cover, sappers used grenades, satchel charges, tear gas and incendiary grenades against the personnel inside. Numerous charges and grenades were put down the air shafts before tear gas was introduced. Incendiary grenades were put in on top of the gas. At this time, all VMSF who were in the bunker, went outside and surrendered. Their fate is unknown.

During the night, six of the eight USASF personnel inside the bunker were wounded.

The last attempt to destroy the bunker was made at dawn. Two large charges were put down the vent shaft on the North side of the bunker, partially blowing the wall away. After day light commo was reestablished with USASF personnel at the old camp site, and also with FAC.

The USASF personnel on the old site made several attempts (using Laotians) to reach the TOC, but were driven back. When it became evident that no relief was coming, CPT Willoughby called all available air on the hill. When the air strike was lifted, the trapped personnel made it off the hill while the aircraft made dummy runs to keep enemy heads down.

It was necessary to leave SP4 Moreland behind, due to his being in a complete stupor and becoming violent when disturbed. This was due to head wounds received during the sapper attack on the TOC.

/s/ Emanuel E. Phillips
/t/ EMANUEL E. PHILLIPS
SSG, RA 19 531 361

NICKOLAS FRAGOS

For me the action in Lang Voi started at 06 February at 1200 hours when I went on guard. The weather was clear with small clouds at 2000 ft. At about 06 2300 hours a trip flare went off in the south outer perimeter of the camp on the road leading to Lang Troai. Most of the camp opened up at this time since all of us expected an attack in the near future. After 15 minutes everyone stopped firing and again all was normal. At 070015 hours another trip flare went off in about the same area. At this time I saw two men cutting the wire in front of a vehicle. The vehicle later was identified as a tank. Both men were cut down by small arms fire from the camp perimeter. At this time the tank turned on its spotlight for about 30 seconds and "G-2d" the area before running over the wire.

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I ran down to the TOC and reported what I had witnessed to the CO and to LTC Schungel. LTC Schungel came out with me to see it with his own eyes. The tank had momentarily stopped and was shooting away at the bunkers in 104 company area with its main gun and machinegun. Immediately I went to get some LAWs that I had by my guard position. I came back and started arming them. I managed to load them, one by one handing them over to LTC Schungel. He fired at the two tanks visible. At this time we heard the 106 recoilless rifle fire at the tanks. One of the tanks caught on fire. We ran out of LAWs so I went to get some more from the 4.2 mortar pit. At this time the 4.2 crew was putting out illumination for the camp.

I grabbed 4 LAWs and proceeded to crawl back towards the TOC since there were green tracers going over my head coming from the North side of the wire. I reloaded all the LAWs, gave two to LTC Schungel and kept two. My first LAW misfired or didn't fire at all. I was aiming the other one at a tank coming up the hill in 104 company. This one seemed to have landed between the ground and the front track of the tank. Right away I received machinegun fire from the tank so I went to LTC Schungel's position. He couldn't get the safety out of one of the LAWs. I played with it for a few minutes but was still unable to take the safety off. I went down the TOC with the LAW to get a sharp instrument but was still unable to remove the damn thing so I left the LAW there. I told the CO that I was getting some fire from the North wire at which time he proceeded to call V.T. on that area. Going back outside, I saw that the tank had reached the top of the hill about 100 meters from the TOC. LTC Schungel fired one of his LAWs and struck the side of the tank with a big splash of fire. The tank kept on moving towards the Bru company area. Someone had brought another LAW so LTC Schungel, SFC Holt, SP4 Moreland and myself made a mad charge towards the Bru company area where the tank was and attempted to fire the LAW. It didn't go off so we started shooting at it with M-16s and throwing grenades, with no success. We moved back towards the TOC at which time someone asked for some C-4. SP4 Moreland and I moved to the 4.2 pit and were on our way to the ammo bunker for C-4 when the fuel dump next to it blew up into roaring flame. Unable to move towards the ammo bunker I found two more LAWs and SP4 Moreland and myself moved back towards the TOC.

Back at the TOC was LTC Schungel, SP4 Mc Murry and 1LT Wilkins. I gave someone a LAW and attempted to fire one myself with no success. I started firing my M-16 toward the south fence where I saw another tank approaching the wire. I saw one tank to my left moving towards the TOC so I went downstairs as I had expended all my ammo. Downstairs one of the MSF SGT's and one Interpreter were wounded so I went to work on them with the medical chest I had in the TOC. The whole front door of the TOC had been blown away by a round from the tank. 1LT Longgear had come down the stairs and said he had seen four sappers and shot three of them near the 81mm mortar pit. A tank was heard near the TOC so we assumed that LTC Schungel had been killed. Everything was quiet in the TOC for a while except the commo and the wounded in anguish. There were about 25 Vietnamese packed into the TOC. Amidst all the confusion we heard a large explosion from the tower of the TOC so we imagined it was blown away by the tank. Hand grenades started dropping down the tower and a burst of flame exploded. Later we found out it was an incendiary grenade. The place caught on fire from all the paper laying around the TOC. On top of that, the smoke was so thick that it made visibility impossible. The smoke also made breathing impossible unless you laid flat on the floor. I scrambled around in the dark and found a gas mask which I shared with the camp commander for a while. Next someone said "They threw some gas". I saw the VNSF camp commander coughing and speaking some Vietnamese to his people and the next thing I saw was all the Vietnamese make

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it to the outside of the TOC including our Interpreter. I waited about five minutes and went towards the door of the TOC. I heard someone calling us in English and I shoved my head slowly by the door and looked up outside of the TOC. The stairs and the cover of the stairwell were blown off. Outside was real light from spooky dropping flares. I saw five or six Vietnamese lined up around the exit on top and my interpreter asking me to come out. I started to ask him something when I saw the head of an NVA with a camouflaged steel pot and an AK-50 folding stock pointed at the prisoners. I pulled back from the door and heard the click of a grenade follow me and I screamed "grenade" while seeking cover in the floor. The grenade blew up and I got a small piece of shrapnel in the left elbow. I managed to move junk on top of me since more grenades were tumbling down the staircase. Another English speaking voice asked for the captain and if he had a weapon. Someone said yes and more hand grenades came down. At times it sounded as if someone was crawling down the stairs towards us. 1LT Longgear, SPl Moreland and I stood by the door waiting. Then we opened up at the same time towards the door to discourage anyone from coming down. I went into the CO's room to get some ammo and a huge charge and explosion came down the air vent knocking me unconscious. When I awoke it was about 0330. I could not hear anything at this time. My ears were bad from firing the LAWS, yet I could hear digging outside the TOC. But heard nothing inside the TOC. I assumed that everyone was dead so I slowly crawled under the CO's bed. The smoke was so bad that I started throwing up and someone said shhh! (shut up). It seemed strange that someone else was alive, but playing dead, so I crawled closer to the wall put on my gas mask and waited. There was still digging going on above me and hand grenades dropping down the air vents. About daybreak I heard the sound of an airplane. Next I heard what I knew to be A-1 skyraiders diving and dropping bombs on the camp. This went on during the morning. We figured that the NVA had left the hill but every time the plane made a pass, a machinegun on top of the TOC would open up on the aircraft. Some time in the morning we got radio contact with 15A, SFC Ashley, informing us that he, along with a small force, was closing in our location to rescue us. This of course made all of us very happy until we heard a firefight outside and a call on the PRC-25 from SFC Ashley informing us that he was unable to reach the TOC because of enemy resistance. Later on Ashley contacted us saying that he was once again in the process of coming to our rescue. Again, as twice before, a firefight was heard outside and the information came to us via PRC-25 that all attempts had failed to rescue us. It was past 1200 hours and I had my hands full trying to calm down SPl Moreland who had earlier in the morning been hit in the head by the explosion in the air vent, the largest explosion of the whole affair. He was semiconscious, screaming when someone touched him, unable to recognize or understand anything said to him. Realizing that morphine was contradictory in head injuries I found it necessary to give him a morphine syrette I.M. to keep him quiet as it was the only way possible that we could make the enemy think that we were dead.

A-1 Skyraiders made pass after pass dropping their load of napalm and bombs. About 1400 hours I once again saw the captain digging himself out of the rubble. I had thought him dead since the first big explosion in the TOC tower.

There were eight of us now. We were all injured in one way or another except the two commo people (Dooms and Phillips). We decided that it was getting late and it would be suicide to stay here another night. We had been without water or food for over 24 hours. Everyone was physically exhausted and close to the point of shock. I had thrown up about seven times all through the night from the smoke and the gas causing me to be dehydrated and weak.

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We decided to make a break for it since no more rescue operations would be attempted. At about 1530 CPT Willoughby called in all the napalm and bombs that the A-1 skyraiders had to cover our withdrawal from the TOC. Ashley had told us on the radio which route he received the least enemy fire from. With 1LT Longgren in the lead, each one of us climbed the stairs and dashed towards supply bunker #2. I had almost reached the supply bunker when I heard automatic fire from one of the bunkers to my right. I dropped and observed 1LT Longgren open up with his M-16 towards that bunker. No more resistance came from that bunker, so he got up and ran towards highway 9 just below supply #2. Of the eight Americans in the TOC, seven of us made it out. It was decided by all of us that SP4 Moreland would be left behind since at this time he was in complete shock and would require about four of us just to raise him out of the TOC. The stairs were blown away, all that was left was a hole to climb out of. Also it would require four of us to carry him away and all but two of us were wounded and were unfit to help. We made our way to highway 9 as the planes made dummy passes over the camp in support of us.

When we reached the front gate we saw our jeep coming down the road with Ashley's body in back. All of us got into the jeep and were taken to the old camp where the helicopters came and took us to Khe Sanh combat base. After initial medical care to most of us, we were put on a C-130 aircraft and flown to Danang.

/s/ Nicholas Fragos
/t/ NICKOLAS FRAGOS
SGT, RA 16 828 648

SGT RICHARD H. ALLEN

At about 1800 hours, 6 Feb we started receiving incoming artillery rounds. I was at the new camp eating dinner and at 1830 hours I went back to the old camp by jeep accompanied by SP4 Johnson. The artillery kept up until dark.

I lay down about 2300 hours, to be wakened at 0015 hours by Johnson telling me that the other camp was being hit. SGT Ashley was on the radio (PRC-25). From our position there was nothing that we could really do.

CPT Willoughby had called for artillery support and air support almost immediately. It seemed that there was no real way to stop tanks. I was 0130 hours before we got any help from Khe Sanh; then all we received was illumination rounds. We did have a FAC flying around overhead. Also at 0130 hours one aircraft arrived, "Spooky". He started dropping flares, but would not come down to fire his guns.

Until this time we could not get the Laotians to give us a hand, but now they dropped in illumination rounds with their 81's. Tanks were starting to come towards our camp and were firing their guns at us. The Laotian officers still did not want to be disturbed. Ashley, Johnson and myself were the only ones trying to get anything done. We couldn't get any Laotians to go with us to help defend the camp. SGT Ashley finally started controlling the flareship, as to where drop the flares.

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25 From our positions we saw two tanks, one on the north end and one on the south end firing at everything in between. We could see several trip flares going off around the camp. Funny bombs were dropped at the Eastern slope of the helicopter pad.

The night started out nice and clear, but early in the A.M. The visibility became somewhat limited. At 0330 hours B 52's arrived making bombing runs on Co Roc. The new camp had received some H.E. rounds from Khe Sanh, but they seemed to be hitting the camp and were discontinued. Around 0400 hours we (Ashley, Johnson and myself) lost contact with CPT Willoughby. Then two skyhawks came in and we called strafing runs and B.T.V. At this time there was only sporadic firing coming from the camp.

Just prior to dawn, the people from Lang Vei Village #1 tried to get into camp. We had to persuade the Laotian Col to keep the villagers out. We also got the word from FAC that NVA were sited headed towards the old camp and village.

At around 0645 hours we heard from Mc Murry. We informed him that we were on our way. We then tried to muster up 100 Laotians to go with us. It took almost an hour. We then started out of the camp on the highway where we were met by about 20 CIDG. They were happy to see us (Americans). We persuaded them to go to the other camp to pick up the survivors and retake the camp if necessary. Just before entering the camp we called in strafing runs by the two skyhawks overhead. We then ventured up the hill. We found a few seriously wounded CIDG (or MSF). We entered through the 101 company area and counted two CIDG and several NVA bodies. There were satchel charges laying all around. There I dropped my carbine and picked up a BAR and some grenades. We got to the hill at the end of 101 Company. There we picked up enemy machinegun fire. I was on the right flank, Johnson on the left, Ashley in the middle. Before we could advance the indigenous retreated. We went down the hill to regroup. I had to run all the way back to the other camp to get some of them back. Some of them disappeared and I brought back six by pointing my BAR at them. When I returned I found SSG Tiroch and MSG Craig down at our location. MSG Craig was wounded in the hip and had lost his hearing. On the first run we tried to pinpoint the NVA positions. I counted about nine NVA alive.

Craig and Tiroch joined us this time and again we assaulted the hill. This time we were met by 81mm and 60mm Rounds hitting around us. I was again in my position about 25 ft from the first bunker. The enemy was throwing grenades and the indigenous withdrew forcing us to leave the hill. This time several wounded CIDG came out of the camp. I gave morphine to the ones for which it was necessary and bandaged as many as possible. When the strafing and bombing runs were finished we tried again. We had to force the exhausted and wounded Craig to stay behind. By this time we had lost half of our indigenous (they split). On our third run Johnson and Tiroch grabbed a 60mm mortar and tried to return the enemy fire. We didn't seem to be getting anywhere. The aircraft were making bombing runs at the opposite end of camp. On our fourth try Johnson knocked out the first bunker with a 57 recoilless rifle, but still could not advance. On our fifth run up we had three choppers overhead to try to pick up the wounded. We were not receiving any fire; we got up to the first NVA position and there Ashley was hit on the right side of his chest and the round went through the radio on his back. At this time all the indigenous split.

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At this time I attended to Ashley's wound and administered artificial respiration. At this time the choppers left and I had to get Ashley down the Hill, with Tiroch covering me. At the wire I forced about six indigenous to assist me to get him to get him on the jeep. From there Johnson gave Ashley artificial respiration until we got to the old camp. After we got there I got bandages, but before I could get them on Ashley, we were hit by an artillery round. This round knocked out Johnson, therefore making it necessary for me to administer artificial respiration to him. 26

Then CPT Willoughby managed to break out and was retrieved by the jeep driven by Qx- (LLDB). By then Ashley was dead, we could not get any other reinforcements. Our aircraft then had ten minutes flying time left and no exact news of choppers. The Laotians had moved to the front of the camp and were going to leave us there.

Our air support tried to discourage them. At about 1630 hours choppers came accompanied by a jet. We extracted six wounded USASF on the first aircraft, the rest on the second.

/s/ Richard H. Allen
/t/ RICHARD H. ALLEN
SGT, RA 19 876 744

SPL JOEL JOHNSON

At approximately 1730 on 6 February, I was at the new camp with SGT Allen when we started drawing artillery fire from Co Roc. It stopped and we went back to the old camp with the Laotians. At 2100 hours 6 February the new camp started taking artillery rounds. They took between 40-50 rounds in all. At 0030 hours 7 February the tanks were sighted by SGT Charles Lindevald with many ground troops behind them. CPT Willoughby called "intrigud" and told them we were getting hit with tanks. About an hour and a half later, planes arrived without rockets; he also called the Marines at Khe Sanh for artillery support. At the old camp we received only sporadic small arms fire. During this time 2 tanks had maneuvered into the drop zone below our camp. When I spotted them, I asked SGT Ashley to give me 50 men and a 3.5, and I would knock those tanks out. He said, "okay, ask the Laotian commander". When I asked him he said, "too many NVA, cannot do anything till morning". Meanwhile, unimpeded, the tanks pounded the front of the camp.

Spooky was also sent out with only a few flares. When the jets finally arrived, the first bomb they dropped was on our old camp. They adjusted from there. At 0420 hours we lost radio contact with the new camp. From our camp we directed the air strikes on the new camp. At first light we went to the Laotian commander and asked for men to go to the new camp. He said "okay", but it took one hour to get those people moving. As we left the gate, we ran into some CIDG and MSF that E & B'd from the new camp. We took them with our element. I was with both Ashley and Allen when we reached the front gate of the new camp. We spread the men out and went up the hill. There were dead NVA with weapons and equipment all along the hill. There were many satchel charges laying on bunkers and all over the ground. When we reached the top, we saw some men waving to us from two bunkers. I told them to raise

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their hands and come out but they just kept waving us forward. I told everyone to get down then they started firing. The Laotians left me pinned down up there by two machineguns and some small arms. Then a mortar round went off next to me and blew me behind some cover. I called Allen on the other flank also by himself to pull back. We did so. SGT Ashley called in air. We assaulted the hill twice more but the people wouldn't move or then flank the bunkers. We pulled back again to the gate and called in air. Then from out of the brush came SSG Tiroch and SFC Craig.

We assaulted once more with Allen & Tiroch on one flank and Craig and myself on the other. But the people (Laos) wouldn't fire. We met with the same result again. Then we reached the bunkers with the machineguns in them. This time we got the people to return fire. SGT Ashley called back to the old camp for a 57 recoilless rifle. I showed the gunner where the two bunkers were, but when he fired it was high and missed the whole camp. I then took the 57, had a man load for me and put three rounds in each bunker. One man was seen running, but SSG Tiroch shot him. Even with no more firing coming from those bunkers, the people would not advance. So we pulled back and called in more air. Then down the road came LTC Schungel with another man. The Colonel was wounded in the right leg. SFC Craig took the colonel back to the old camp. As we started back up the hill again Tiroch saw LT Ouy and some CIDG coming toward us. He then directed them back to the camp.

We assaulted once more. Tiroch, Allen and Ashley were on one side. I was on the other. This time we made it past the bunkers and I tied in with Tiroch's element. Once more we started receiving fire from our front and our troops ran.

I took off after them leaving Ashley, Tiroch, Allen and some CIDG. I finally got some men to stop running and we tried to flank from the other side. Then someone told me an American was hit, so I ran to the other side and saw Allen dragging SGT Ashley. I helped him all I could, but we needed more men. So he went and got them. Tiroch and I covered our retreat when we got Ashley down and in the jeep. I immediately started mouth-to-mouth respiration. I was still doing it when a 105mm round knocked me out.

/s/ Joel Johnson
/c/ JOEL JOHNSON
SP4, RA 14 952 518

SP4 FRANKLIN H. DOOMS

When the attack started I was in the 4,2 bunker. Artillery started coming in and LT Wilkins and myself were told to shoot ammunition. I was setting time on alarm while LT Wilkins fired them. A few minutes later someone said there were tanks in the wire. Soon after that SFC Craig and SP4 Phillips came to my bunker and were bleeding from the head wounds. SSG Tiroch came to the bunker and suggested we fire some H.E. just outside the wire to detain any ground troops that might be with the tanks. SGT Fragos came to me asking for IAWs and I gave him seven.

Next I saw a tank stop at my generators and fire. At that time I saw a tank coming up by the Mess Hall. LT Wilkins fired a IAW at it. But it didn't stop.

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coming. It passed us and went into 103 company. I saw it blow bunkers with men in them.

Next SSG Brooks and SSG Tiroch came with a .50 cal. machinegun and placed fire on the tank. At that time VT started coming in and I left my bunker for the TOC.

When I got to the TOC there was a tank sitting outside. Shortly after I entered the TOC the door was blown down and we were trapped. The enemy started throwing hand grenades down at us. Later they threw down gas and incendiary grenades. I had no gas mask so used my first aid packet over my nose and mouth. At that time all the LLDB went out to give up. That left eight Americans. Someone speaking English asked if anyone was down there and if we had weapons and ammo. We answered yes and more grenades came down.

By this time we had many wounded, I gave CPT Willoughby some morphine and tied a first aid packet around SSG Brook's head. Then we played dead and hoped for help in the morning. Just before daylight another charge went off and blew the side of the TOC.

After daylight the reaction force came up on the radio and said they were trying to get to us. They tried all morning but had to withdraw each time because of heavy enemy fire. Around 1500 hours on the 7th, we knew no help could get to us so CPT Willoughby called in air support and we made a run for it.

A jeep met us at the camp gate and took us to the old camp. Later that afternoon we were picked up by choppers and taken to Khe Sanh Combat Base. From there we were taken by C-130 to Co C, Danang.

/s/ Franklin H. Dooms
/t/ FRANKLIN H. DOOMS
SPL, RA 13 811 374

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CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING OF ENEMY ACTIVITY AND CONTACTS FROM 01 JANUARY TO 06 FEBRUARY 1968

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- | DATE | ENEMY ACTIVITY OR CONTACT REPORTED (Evaluation given agent reports is shown in parenthesis) |
|-------------|---|
| 1. 2 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified VC Battalion, strength 500 vicinity coordinates XD 782245. First recent report of battalion size activity at this location. (C-6) |
| 2. 6 Jan: | Agent reported two unidentified VC Companies, strength 400 vicinity XD 958427. Mission: To spread propaganda and make appeals for assistance. (C-6) |
| 3. 7 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified VC Company, strength 80, crossed Sepone River, vicinity XD 775310 to XD 795315. (C-6) Area contains known crossing points for infiltration routes. |
| 4. 8 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified VC company, strength 100, vicinity XD 849337. |
| 5. 9 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified VC Battalion (Montagnard), strength 300, moved from XD 615375 to vicinity XD 615417. (F-6) |
| 6. 11 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified squad moved from XD 715364 to vicinity XD 740360. Mission: Patrol Se Pone river area. |
| 7. 12 Jan: | Operation made contact with an estimated NVA Company at XD 730343 |
| 8. 12 Jan: | Agent reported two NVA Companies moved from XD 709465 to vicinity XD 751475. (F-3) |
| 9. 12 Jan: | Night ambush patrol ambushed estimated VC platoon vicinity XD 780343. Enemy broke contact and patrol relocated to vicinity XD 783350. |
| 10. 13 Jan: | Same patrol ambushed estimated company plus VC force vicinity XD 783350. Enemy force pursued patrol to within 500 meters of camp after contact was broken. |
| 11. 13 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified unit, strength 200, vicinity XD 684382. (C-3) Known enemy infiltration route. |
| 12. 13 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified unit, strength 163, vicinity XD 770268. (C-3) |
| 13. 14 Jan: | Agent reported one unidentified NVA Regiment moved from XD 781245 to vicinity 633267, 79 2269 and 760267. Approximately 300 men of this unit in camouflage uniform while remainder wore khakis (C-3). |
| 14. 17 Jan: | Villagers in Lang Vei (XD 795360) and Lang Bu (XD 819383) were building bunkers, presumably for self protection. |

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15. 19 Jan: Agent reported one unidentified NVA unit, strength 500, moved into XD 667375. (C-3)
16. 19 Jan: Operation P-10 observed unknown enemy unit of 30-35 VC crossing the Se Pone river vicinity 778348.
17. 21 Jan: Operation ambushed an estimated NVA company at XD 764345.
18. 21 Jan: A road clearing party was ambushed by an estimated VC platoon at XD 812367.
19. 21 Jan: A 3 man MSF LP was probed by an estimated VC platoon.
20. 22 Jan: Operation reported large number of unidentified VC moving east on highway 9 vicinity XD 742362.
21. 23 Jan: Interrogation conducted by Marines: Source stated that if first attack on Khe Sanh fails, they will pull back to Laos until after TET. They will again attack Khe Sanh with artillery, tanks and twice as many troops. Source had not seen tanks, only heard that Russian and Chinese models were on the way down from the North. Stated big attack would be 3 February.
22. 24 Jan: Air Force FAC observed five tanks vicinity coordinates XD 653374. One tank reported destroyed by airstrike, other tanks moved west along route 9.
23. 24 Jan: 33rd Royal Laotian Battalion attacked by NVA utilizing tanks in Laos. Survivors and refugees retreated in South Vietnam and arrived at Lang Vei on evening of 24 January. NVA unit was identified by Laotians as the 304th NVA DIV and also as the 325th NVA Division.
24. 25 Jan: Camp Lang Vei received artillery fire from vicinity XD 753320 to 775324 to 733337 to 746219.
25. 25 Jan: Five man CIDG ambush force ambushed an estimated VC company vicinity XD 784349.
26. 30 Jan: Hoi chanh received by Camp Lang Vei. Preliminary interrogation by USMC revealed: unit 3rd plat, 6th Company, 8th Battalion, 66th Regiment 304th Div departed NVN on 10 Sep 67. 7th Battalion (strength near 200) involved in 21 Jan Jan attack on Khe Sanh District and is located vicinity XD 8436. 8th Bn (strength approx 200) near XD 8338. The Battalions XO and one sapper squad from Regiment HQ conducted a recon of the Lang Vei SF camp on night of 28 Jan. Mission: to pinpoint heavy and automatic weapons. Hoi Chanh stated that his company had been alerted to attack Camp Lang Vei twice, but each time the attack was called off. Stated that the 307th and 380th Div had also departed NVN for Quang Tri Province. The 325th Div had the mission of taking the Khe Sanh Combat Base, Khe Sanh and the Lang Vei SF camps. Subject stated that during movement south, he had heard many tracked vehicles.
27. 31 Jan: A 17 man Laotian Recon element was ambushed by estimated two NVA companies at XD 815370. 27

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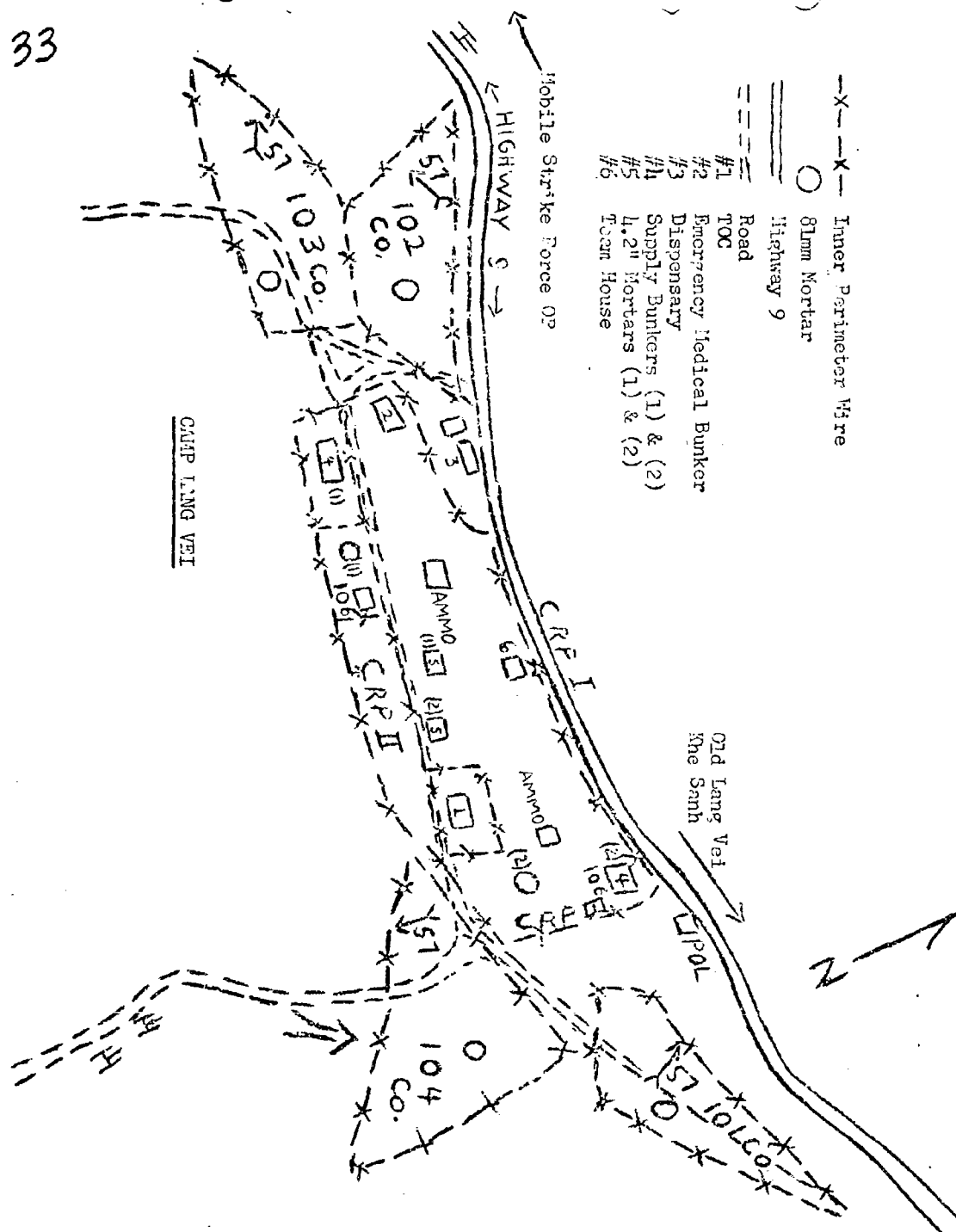
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28. 31 Jan: A three platoon reaction force from camp consisting of MSF, CSF, 8 USASF and 3 VNSF made contact vicinity XD 813372 with an estimated enemy platoon which took 75% casualties. Enemy was reinforced by estimated three NVA companies.
29. 1 Feb: Agent reported 50 to 60 NVA seen leaving ambush site at XD 813372.
30. 2 Feb: A CIDG who escaped from NVA reported enemy troops located at XD 842370, 840363, 844355, 806343, 802337, 795366, 798336, 785314, 745283, 784294, 784302, 755312. (F-3) Airstrikes requested by camp on these locations.
31. 2 Feb: Camp received 8 rounds 82mm mortar from XD 803326 and 787333. Counter mortar fire conducted.
32. 2 Feb: Two platoons of MSF and CSF ambushed by an estimated platoon of NVA at XD 793374.
33. 2 Feb: MSF made chance contact with NVA squad in ambush position at XD 777356.
34. 4 Feb: One squad of VC ambushed a MSF platoon vicinity XD 779343 with homemade (claymore type) mines.
35. 6 Feb: Camp Lang Vei at 1115 hours received three mortar rounds inside perimeter. Fired 106 RR and 4.2 mortar at enemy mortar positions.
36. 6 Feb: At approximately 1845 hours Camp Lang Vei came under attack by an estimated 40-60 rounds of artillery fire.

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GENERAL NARRATIVE OF EVENTS

24 January - 5 February 1968

On 24 January 1968, the 33d Royal Laotian Battalion was overrun in Laos by NVA forces utilizing tanks. The Laotians, 520 soldiers and 2200 dependents, withdrew across the border to Lang Vei. The dependents were moved into Lang Vei village and the Laotian Battalion was located on the site of old Camp Lang Vei until arrangements could be completed for their air evacuation back to Laos. Apparently the Laotians had no real knowledge as to the identity of the enemy force which attacked them, for both the 304th NVA Division and the 325th NVA Division were reported by the Laotians as the unit which attacked them. The Laotian soldiers and dependents were furnished rice, powdered milk, and PIR's to supplement the rice. All 2700 of them were inoculated against cholera by USASF advisory personnel. Attention, barrier materials, and tools were furnished the Laotian battalion in order that they could refortify the defenses of the old camp.

One hundred additional M-72 IAW's and additional 106mm RR ammunition were delivered to Camp Lang Vei to strengthen the camp's defenses against an attack by armored vehicles. In spite of the fact that he knew that the enemy had an armor capability, Captain Willoughby stated that the camp did not expect an attack in which tanks would physically penetrate the camp defenses. He believed that any attack on the Special Forces camp would consist of ground forces attempting to penetrate the camp defenses with fire support being furnished by the tanks from outside the perimeter wire. Willoughby suspected that the tanks were intended for an attack against the Khe Sanh combat base.

Instruction on the M-72 IAW was presented to the Camp Strike Force and Mobile Strike Force personnel and limited familiarization firing was conducted. Captain Willoughby estimated that 75 - 85 IAW's were on hand after the training program and familiarization firing was completed. Because the Laotian Battalion Commander, a Colonel, desired someone of more equal rank at Lang Vei, LTC Schungel adopted the policy of keeping one field grade officer on site.

6 - 7 February 1968

On 6 February at approximately 1030 hours, camp Lang Vei came under mortar attack. Three rounds landed within the perimeter and wounded eight Camp Strike Force personnel. LTC Schungel arrived at Lang Vei that afternoon and replaced LTC Hoadley (XO, Co C) as the field grade officer on site. At approximately 1800 hours the camp again came under attack; 40 - 50 rounds of estimated 152mm artillery were received in the southern perimeter wire generally in the 104 company area. Two soldiers were wounded and two bunkers were damaged.

Special Handling Required
NOT RELEASABLE TO FOREIGN NATIONALS
By Authority of CO, 5th SFGA. Date 22 Mar 68

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Incl 8 to 5th SFGA OUL for the Period Ending 30 April 1968

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During both the morning and the evening attacks, the camp placed counterfire on the suspected enemy gun locations utilizing the two 4.2" mortars and the two 106 mm Recoilless Rifles. All firing ceased at approximately 1900 hours. At approximately 1930 hours, troops within the 104 Company area reported hearing noises, similar to engines running, coming from the vicinity of Lang Troai (XD780344) south of the camp. The Mobile Strike Force OP to the west (XD778531) reported hearing noises. At approximately 2100 hours, three trip flares were triggered in the MSF OP area. The MSF soldiers manning the OP commenced firing and soon the CIDG in the base camp were firing also. Order was restored and the firing ceased. At approximately 2240 hours, a trip flare went off in the outer perimeter wire south of 104 Company on the road leading to Lang Troai. Again, most of the camp opened fire; however, within a few minutes the firing ceased. At 2249 hours SSG Brooks, from the supply bunker located on the south side, reported movement on the road. Two 81mm mortar illumination rounds were fired and two tanks were observed in the wire. About one platoon of enemy troops was also seen in the 104 Company area outer wire. 104 Company immediately opened fire. At approximately the same time, the OP to the west came under attack by 60mm and 82mm mortar fire which was followed by a ground attack consisting of tanks and possibly as much as one company of infantry. Requests for FAC and air support were immediately made to both the Marines at Khe Sanh and Company C in Danang. CPT Willoughby requested the Marines to fire preplanned Special Forces concentrations near the tanks and around the OP. The first mission was received after about 17 - 20 minutes and was completely off the preplanned target area. CPT Willoughby did not know that the Khe Sanh combat base was receiving artillery fire at the same time camp Lang Vei was being attacked. The tanks had turned their lights on and were sweeping the area; however, small arms fire from the camp extinguished the lights. The tanks fired both their main armament and machine guns at the bunkers. By this time the 106mm RR on the south side was manned by SFC Holt who was later assisted by SFC Craig and SGT Tiroch. Holt knocked out both of the tanks that were in the southern perimeter wire.

At least three other tanks appeared on the road from Lang Troai and drove around the two disabled tanks toward 104 Company. The troops in 104 Company area were still engaged in fire with the enemy forces in their wire as the tanks rolled closer and penetrated the 104 Company defenses. Tank killer teams (LTC Schungel, LT Wilkins, LT Longgear, LT Quy, SFC Brande, SGT Fragos, SGT Early, and SP5 McMurray) were fighting the tanks with M-72 LAW's. One of the tanks was immobilized and the three crewmen that crawled out were killed with grenades and small arms fire. The 57mm RR manned by an indigenous crew also fired at the tanks. USASF and indigenous personnel were observed climbing on tanks and attempting to throw grenades into the buttoned up tank moving west on highway 9 adjacent to the team hours. Armed with M72 LAW's LT Wilkins engaged a tank which was moving west on highway 9. He scored one

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direct hit on the front end of the tank. Another LAW misfired. The tank moved west on the road closer to the dispensary. Wilkins fired a third LAW and hit the tank in the left tread with no noticeable effect.

The MSF OP had reported to the TOC that they were surrounded by NVA troops and were still under attack. Possibly four tanks followed by two platoons of ground troops were moving west on highway 9 toward the camp. 102 and 104 Company areas were assaulted by the NVA ground forces, who then withdrew. The infantry forces were predominantly armed with AK-47 assault rifles. Tanks then apparently penetrated the two company areas followed by the infantry.

Within approximately 45 minutes after 104 Company area was penetrated, the enemy tanks had driven the survivors out into CRP 1 and CRP 3 areas. The enemy troops that were following the tanks assumed firing positions in 104 Company area. Fighting was still raging in 101, 102 and 103 Company areas. The inner perimeter was receiving small arms fire but had not yet been penetrated by tanks.

USASF personnel at old Camp Lang Vei were firing 81 HE and illumination in support. As of yet, they had not received any mortar or small arms fire. Specialist Johnson spotted two tanks on the supply drop zone which was located between old camp Lang Vei and the camp under attack (vicinity XD791358).

When Company C made their initial request to III MAF COC for air support, they were informed that "Spooky", FAC, and TAC AIR were already on station over the Khe Sanh combat base. Personnel at Camp Lang Vei were unable to establish radio contact with them. At 0055 hours a FAC finally established radio contact with Camp Lang Vei. He informed CPT Willoughby that fighter aircraft were on the way. "Spooky" was on station by 0101 hours. CPT Willoughby had monitored a conversation between the FAC and "Spooky". Initially "Spooky" was so high and far away from the camp (probably over Khe Sanh combat base) that the FAC could not locate him. "Spooky" was concerned about the effect of tank fire on his aircraft and said something to the effect that he could not do anything to the tanks, but they could sure work on him. CPT Willoughby requested fire on the south edge of the perimeter. "Spooky" never delivered the fire.

Fighter aircraft were orbiting on station shortly after 0100 hours. At 0136 hours a bomb was accidentally dropped on the old camp site where SFC Ashley, SGT Allen, and SFC Johnson were located with the Laotian battalion. There were no casualties. Airstrikes were delivered along the ravine on the north side of camp Lang Vei, on the road to Lang Troai south of the camp and to the west of the MSF OP. By this time (0200 hours), both of the 106mm RR had been knocked out by the enemy tanks - but not before SFC Holt managed to knock out his third enemy tank, one that had penetrated 104 Company area. When he fired the last 106mm HEAT round located at his position,

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SFC Holt left the 106mm RR. Almost immediately afterwards, a blast from an enemy tank destroyed the recoilless rifle and the beehive rounds co-located with the weapon. It is believed that Holt had previously fired two or three beehive rounds at the enemy ground forces.

Marine artillery fire was directed on 104 Company area and adjusted on target by "walking" it in from the south. 105mm illumination support was also received from the Marines until "Spooky" and a flareship assumed this role.

A large concentration of enemy (approximately one company) attempted to penetrate the northern wire opposite 101 Company area. A request for preplanned fires into the area was made to the Marines. The mission initially landed on top of the camp but was adjusted on target. The artillery and effective small arms fire from 101 Company stopped the assault. However, enemy sappers and tanks had penetrated 101 Company area from 104 Company area and forced 101 Company to pull back into CRP 2 and CRP 3 areas. The entire eastern end of the "dogbone" shaped camp was lost. Shortly afterwards, the tanks and NVA forces in 102 and 103 Company areas took the western end of the "dogbone". Communications were lost with both companies. Apparently the CIDG were not able to withdraw into the inner perimeter. Survivors stated that they moved out of the camp north of 102 Company area and then east - some to the old camp site and some to Khe Sanh. Artillery was then called in on both ends of the camp. Both the eastern and western ends of the camp had now been overrun, and tanks were approaching the inner perimeter from both directions.

At approximately 0230 hours, communications with the MSF OP were lost. SFC Lindwald had been seriously wounded by automatic weapons fire in the chest or abdomen. Survivors from the OP escaped to the south and last saw SFC Hanna, who was also wounded, administering first aid to Lindwald on top of the OP as it was about to be overrun. SFC Craig, SFC Burke, SSG Thompson, SSG Tiroch and SP5 Phillips were occupying a position on the western side of the team house. It was approximately 0245 hours when a tank rolled from 103 Company area past supply bunker #1 and appeared to be headed toward the 4.2" mortar pit. Along with approximately 40 - 50 CIDG personnel, this group attempted to escape and evade through the northern perimeter wire. Machine gun fire from the eastern end of the camp prevented Craig and Tiroch from getting through the wire. Eventually the two Americans succeeded in getting through the wire. They moved approximately 100 meters north of the wire into a clump of bamboo. After being wounded by CBU fragments, the two moved another 100 - 200 meters into a dry creekbed and remained there the rest of the night.

A tank from 104 Company area penetrated the inner perimeter wire near the 81mm mortar pit #2 (about 30 meters from the tactical operations center bunker, TOC). The tank destroyed the mortar position with its main armament.

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LTC Schungel, LT Wilkins, LT Quy, (VNSF S3, Det C-1), LT Longgrear, SSG Brooks, SGT Fragos, and SP4 Mc Murray (Tank killer teams) had moved back to the TOC in search of more LAW's and were behind the double row of 55 gallon drums that stood in front of the TOC east entrance. Enemy ground forces (sappers and infantry) were also approaching the TOC from the direction of 104 Company area; however effective small arms fire from LT Quy, LT Longgrear and SP5 Mc Murray had stopped them. Brooks, Fragos, and Longgrear went downstairs into the TOC for more LAW's. The tank, which was buttoned up, rolled past the 81mm mortar position that it had just destroyed and stopped approximately 15 meters from the TOC entrance. A LAW was fired at the tank but it had no effect. It fired its main armament straight at the TOC entrance. SP4 Mc Murray was blinded and had both hands mangled by the blast. LT Wilkins was crushed by the heavy barrels which were filled with large rocks and dirt. LTC Schungel was knocked flat and temporarily dazed but suffered only minor cuts and a fragmentation wound in the hip. LT Longgrear knew that LTC Schungel had been standing directly in front of the tank's direction of fire and reported to CPT Willoughby that he had been killed by the blast. The tank remained at the east end of the TOC for approximately 15 minutes. LTC Schungel had by then regained his senses and coordination. He then pulled Mc Murray behind the protection offered by the sandbags at the TOC entrance. Wilkins was conscious by this time and could walk, although not very well. LT Quy was unhurt and suggested that they find a place in which to hide. LTC Schungel agreed. LT Quy left the TOC, but another tank approaching the western end of the TOC prevented Schungel and Wilkins from following. The tank fired its main gun at the observation tower. The blast slightly wounded SP4 Moreland who was climbing the ladder to the tower exit. SGT Early, who was already in the tower, suffered shrapnel wounds on the head and shoulders. Trapped in the TOC with both exits caved in were the following USASF personnel: CPT Willoughby, LT Longgrear, SSG Brooks, SSG Phillips, SGT Early, SGT Fragos, SP4 Moreland and SP4 Dooms. The VNSF camp commander, the VNSF SGM, the 104 Company Commander, one interpreter, and one CIDG commo man were also in the TOC according to Willoughby. The time was approximately 0300 hours.

LTC Schungel threw two grenades under the tank which had just collapsed the tower. Almost simultaneously a weapon (probably a LAW) struck the tank in the rear. The hatch was opened but nothing came out except flames. LTC Schungel and LT Wilkins then sought refuge in the team house. Shortly after they left the TOC, personnel inside the TOC heard Mc Murray talking outside of the TOC. At approximately 0330 hours a party of five NVA armed with AK-47 assault rifles and satchel charges approached the northern door of the team house. LTC Schungel killed all five with his M16 rifle. A satchel charge, or some type of explosive, hit the team house wounding LTC Schungel in the right leg. The two Americans left the team house and cautiously made their way undetected to the dispensary about 0400 - 0430 hours. They hid themselves under the northern end of the building behind a wall of sandbags.

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Two tanks approached just south of the dispensary and the dispensary was occupied by approximately one platoon of NVA soldiers during the night. LTC Schungel and LT Wilkins quietly remained under the dispensary the rest of the night.

After LT Longgear reported to CPT Willoughby that LTC Schungel had been killed, Willoughby believed that the personnel in the TOC were the only US personnel still alive in the camp. At approximately 0320 hours the TOC lost all communication with the outside. The radios were still in good condition; however, the primary and secondary antennae had all been cut by tanks or enemy explosives. Prior to this, communications had been outstanding. After the enemy attempted to swing in satchel charges from each end of the TOC, the personnel inside remained clear of the entrances. Fragmentation grenades, incendiary grenades, and CN or CS gas grenades were thrown into the TOC by the NVA. Breathing was extremely difficult. Some utilized gas masks. Others used a handkerchief or first aid packet or merely kept their head close to the clearer air near the floor. The VMSF camp commander and all the other Vietnamese personnel in the TOC then climbed over the rubble and outside the TOC in response to a voice from the outside which said in Vietnamese, "We are going to blow up the bunker, so give up." About fifteen minutes later, automatic weapons fire was heard outside of the TOC. The employment of satchel charges in the bunker air vents and tossing of grenades continued. At approximately 0600 hours, a satchel charge blew in a large portion of the north wall and seriously wounded SPl Moreland in the head. About 0700 hours, CPT Willoughby was wounded by a grenade that exploded approximately one and a half feet away. The flak jacket he held in front of his upper body stopped most of the fragments and perhaps saved his life. CPT Willoughby lost consciousness at approximately 0830 hours.

Unknown to the personnel in the TOC, efforts were being made by SFC Ashley, SGT Allen, and SPl Johnson (Old Camp Lang Vei) to relieve the trapped Americans. After much persuasion, approximately 60 Laotians were mustered to participate in a relief operation. The three Americans led the Laotians west on highway 9 toward Camp Lang Vei. The party encountered a group of approximately 20 - 40 CIDG survivors near the road and the Americans persuaded them to assist in the operation. The initial assault led by the Americans, was conducted up the length of 101 Company area. When they reached the end of 101 Company area, they began to receive machine gun or automatic small arms fire after which the indigenous troops broke and ran back toward highway 9. The Americans were therefore forced to withdraw. By this time, SFC Craig and SSG Tiroch had left their hiding place in the creekbed and had stumbled upon the Laotian troops and the three Americans near the gate on highway 9. SFC Ashley directed airstrikes on the camp and then the five Americans led a second assault which met similar results. A third assault was attempted but failed. Airstrikes were directed on target by SFC Ashley between each assault.

Meanwhile, LTC Schungel and LT Wilkins hobbled out from under the vacated dispensary at approximately 0930 hours. Two burned out tanks were located just west of the dispensary. They had apparently been hit by aircraft and were reduced to rubble. The two wounded men went to the northern side of

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41 highway 9 where LTC Schungel was again wounded, this time by shrapnel in the thigh. With the assistance of a CIDG soldier, E and LT Wilkins arrived at the east gate entrance to the camp where they were taken to the Laotian camp.

At approximately 1000 hours the TOC regained communications with SFC Ashley. When CPT Willoughby regained consciousness, it was approximately 1100 hours and the American-led Laotian - CIDG group was on their fourth assault. The approach this time was between 101 and 104 Company areas, but the same opposition and same results were met. Between each assault the Americans had to pull back and rally the indigenous troops. In some cases the indigenous troops ran all the way back to old Camp Lang Vei. On the fifth and last assault which carried to within 30 meters of the TOC, SFC Ashley was hit in the right chest by small arms fire. The assault faltered and the indigenous troops again withdrew in spite of American efforts to get them to hold their positions. SGT Allen and SP4 Johnson pulled Ashley out of the line of enemy fire toward the road where Ashley was put in a 1/2 ton truck and carried back to the old camp. First Allen and then Johnson continuously administered mouth to mouth resuscitation to SFC Ashley. Back at the old camp, which was now receiving enemy artillery rounds, SP4 Johnson continued this critical work. An artillery round struck within 15 meters of their location. SP4 Johnson was knocked unconscious and shrapnel mortally wounded SFC Ashley.

All five attempts to relieve the trapped Americans had failed and the Marines at the Khe Sanh combat base had elected not to reinforce the camp according to the existing contingency plan. Requests for assistance from the Marines had been made on two separate occasions by CPT Willoughby. At 0540 hours CPT Edwards (S3, Co C) requested COL Smith (G3 Opns Officer, III MAF) to implement the contingency plan. A conference call among COL Smith, General Cushman (CG, III MAF), General Tompkins (CG, 3d Marine Div), General Westmoreland (COMUSMACV), and LTC Hoadley (XO, Co C) was then conducted. Because it was believed that the attack might be a coordinated major attack against both the Special Forces camp and the Khe Sanh combat base, Lang Vei was not reinforced. Shortly after noon on 7 February, COL Ladd (CO, 5th SFGA) accompanied by LTC Hassinger (DCO, Special Ops), briefed General Westmoreland on the situation at Lang Vei and the requirement to evacuate the survivors of the attack. Also in attendance at this meeting were General Chaisson (Chief COC MACV), General Cushman, General Tompkins, in whose area of responsibility Lang Vei lay, General Anderson (CG, 1st Marine Airwing), and several other officers. LTC Hassinger then briefed the group on a plan to helilift ten Americans and 40 CIDG from FOB #3 into old Lang Vei. There was considerable argument against implementing the plan because of the possibility of losing more men as well as the helicopters. General Westmoreland finally directed that the aircraft be made available to support the movement of the reaction force from FOB #3 into Lang Vei and extract the survivors. COL Ladd coordinated with General Anderson on the aircraft support requirements.

After his arrival at the old camp site, LTC Schungel established communications with MAJ Quano at FOB #3 and coordinated with him on the plan to bring in a fifty man reaction force to evacuate the USASF and more seriously wounded

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indigenous personnel. Via PRC 25 radio, LTC Schungel and CPT Willoughby devised and coordinated a plan for the escape of the Americans from the TOC. CPT Willoughby carefully oriented the FAC as to the location of the TOC and directed airstrikes by AIE Skyraiders in on top of the camp. After the last bombs were dropped and the last strafing runs were conducted, the seven man group climbed out of the TOC entrance in single file led by LT Longgear. CPT Willoughby and SSG Phillips carried SGT Early at the rear of the file. SPM Moreland was still frantic and uncontrollable and had to be left in the TOC. The group received continued ineffective fire and continued northeast past supply bunker #2 to highway 9. LT Quy (who had been captured by the NVA, escaped, and evaded to old Lang Voi) met them at the east gate with the 1/4 ton truck and drove them back to the old camp site.

At approximately 1715 hours MWJ Quamo and the reaction force from FOB #3 arrived on site. Supporting the exfiltration were two FAC's, six AIE aircraft, four jet fighters, five or six Army and Marine helicopter gunships and four Marine CH-46 helicopters. A UH-1D (slick) landed first on the old Lang Voi airstrip (vicinity KD796364). MWJ Quamo directed the entire operation. LTC Schungel, Czaig, Johnson, and Wilkins were evacuated on this first helicopter. Four Marine CH-46 helicopters then landed the reaction force to secure the landing zone during extraction of the remaining Americans and wounded indigenous troops. As the big ships landed, they were mobbed by the frantic Vietnamese and Laotian troops who had to be physically thrown off the choppers. The more seriously wounded indigenous troops were taken by the last helicopter. The evacuation of all US survivors was completed with one exception. LT Todd had spent most of the attack by himself in the emergency medical bunker. At approximately 1700 hours, he left the emergency medical bunker and proceeded to the TOC in hopes that he would find some Americans there. He saw only Moreland, who appeared to be dead. He immediately left the TOC and spotted a helicopter leaving the airstrip near the old camp site. He proceeded to the airstrip and was evacuated by helicopter along with four Americans from FOB #3.

CIDG survivors who escaped and evaded to the Khe Sanh combat base were initially relieved of their weapons by the Marines and turned away at the gate. As soon as it was discovered that this was happening, LTC Headley coordinated with the Marines and, arrangements were made to receive and process the survivors as they appeared. Approximately 160 survivors made their way to the Khe Sanh combat base between the evening of 7 February and 1600 hours on 8 February and were transported to C Company in Danang.

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